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THE  
EMPTINESS and VANITY,  
OF

A L I F E

Spent in the Pursuit of WORDLY PROFIT,  
EASE or PLEASURE,

COMPARED WITH

A L I F E

Wholly employed in endeavouring to GLO-  
RIFY GOD, and DO GOOD to MANKIND:

ILLUSTRATED IN

A N E X T R A C T

O F T H E

L I F E A N D D E A T H

Of the pious LADY

*ELIZABETH HASTINGS.*

W I T H

Some REMARKS on the UNIVERSALITY  
of the LOVE of GOD to MANKIND.

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P H I L A D E L P H I A :

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**I**T is a very remarkable saving of our Lord and Saviour to his disciples: *Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.* It teaches us, that the dulness and heaviness of men's minds, with regard to spiritual matters, is so great, that it may justly be compared to the want of eyes and ears, and that God has so filled every thing, and every place, with motives and arguments for a godly life, that they who are but so blessed, so happy, as to use their eyes and their ears, must needs be affected with them.

Now, tho' this was in a more special manner the case of those, whose senses were witnesses of the life, miracles and doctrines of our blessed Lord; yet is it as truly the case of all Christians at this time: for the reasons of religion, and the calls to piety, are so written and engraved upon every thing, and present themselves so strongly and so constantly to all our senses, in every thing that we meet, that they can only be disregarded by eyes that see not, and ears that hear not. What greater motive to a religious life, than the vanity and poorness of all worldly enjoyments? And yet who can help seeing and feeling this every day of his life. What greater call to look towards God, than the pains, the sickness, the crosses and vexations of this life! And yet whose eyes and ears are not daily witnesses of them? What miracles could more strongly appeal to our senses, or what message from heaven speak louder to us, than the daily dying and departure of our fellow-creatures does. Let us but intend to see and hear, and then the whole world becomes a book of wisdom and instruction to us. All the mistakes and disappointments that happen to ourselves, all the miseries and errors that we see in other people, become so many plain lessons of advice to us, teaching us with as much assurance as an angel from heaven, that we can no ways raise ourselves to any true happiness, but by turning all our thoughts, our wishes and endeavours after the happiness of another life. Ostorius is a learned, ingenious man, well versed in most parts of learning



ing, and no stranger to any kingdom in Europe. The other day, being just recovered from a lingering fever, he took upon him to speak thus to his friends: ' My glass, says he, is almost run out; and your eyes see, how many marks of age and death I bear about me: But I plainly feel myself sinking away faster than any standers-by imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning.' The attention of his friends were much raised by such a declaration, expecting to hear something truly excellent from so learned a man, who had but a year longer to live; when *Octavius* proceeded in this manner: ' For these reasons, says he, my friends! I have left off all taverns, the wine of those places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I must now be nice in what I drink; I can't pretend to do, as I have done; and therefore am resolved to furnish my own cellar with a little of the very best, tho' it cost me ever so much. I must also tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be wise in many other respects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices. You know how much I have liked a large acquaintance; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four chearful diverting companions, is all that I now desire; because I find that in my present infirmities, if I am left alone, or to grave company, I am not so easy to myself.' A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a nurse, who closed his eyes, before his fresh parcel of wine came in. Young *Eugenius*, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God. ' I never, says *Eugenius*, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion, as when I saw, how poorly and meanly the learned *Octavius* was to leave the world, thro' the want of it. How often had I envied his great learning, his skill in languages, his knowledge of antiquity, his address and fine manner of expressing himself upon all subjects! But when I saw, how poorly it all ended, what was to be the last year of such a life, and how foolishly

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' the master of all these accomplishments was then  
 ' forced to talk, for want of being acquainted with the  
 ' joys and expectations of piety ; I was thoroughly con-  
 ' vinced, that there was nothing to be envied or desired,  
 ' but a life of true piety ; nor any thing so poor and com-  
 ' fortless, as a death without it.' Now as the young  
*Eugenius* was thus edified and instructed, so, if you are so  
 happy as to have any thing of his thoughtful temper, you  
 will find, that all the world preaches to an attentive mind ;  
 and that, if you have but ears to hear, almost every thing  
 you meet, teaches you some lesson of wisdom. But now,  
 if to these admonitions and instructions, which we receive  
 from an experience of the state of human life ; if to these  
 we add the lights of religion, those great truths which the  
 Son of God has taught us ; it will be then as much past  
 all doubt, that there is but one happiness for man, as that  
 there is but one God. Was all to die with our bodies,  
 there might be some pretence for those different sorts of  
 happiness that are now so much talked of : But since  
 our all begins at the death of our bodies ; since all men  
 are to be immortal, either in misery or happiness, in a  
 world entirely different from this ; since they are all  
 hastening hence at all uncertainties, as fast as death can  
 cut them down ; some in sickness, some in health, some  
 sleeping, some waking, some at midnight, others at cock-  
 crowing, and all at hours that they know not of ; is it not  
 certain, that no man can exceed another in joy and happi-  
 ness, but so far as he exceeds in those virtues, which fit him  
 for a happy death. *Negotius* is a temperate honest man.  
 He served his time under a master of great trade, but has  
 by his own management made it a more considerable busi-  
 ness than ever it was before. For thirty years last past,  
 he has wrote fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy  
 in corresponding with all parts of Europe. The general  
 good of trade seems to *Negotius* to be the general good  
 of life. As money is continually pouring in upon him,  
 so he often lets it go in various kinds of expence and ge-  
 nerosity, and sometimes in ways of charity. If you ask,  
 what it is, that has secured *Negotius* from all scandalous  
 vices ; it is the same thing that hath kept him from all  
 strictness

strictness of devotion, it is his great business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed, to suffer him to fall either into any courses of rackery, or to feel the necessity of an inward solid piety. If *Negotius* was asked, what it is which he drives in life, he would be at a loss for an answer. He has several confused notions in his head, viz. That it is something great, to have more business than other people; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The generality of people, when they think of happiness, think upon *Negotius*, in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet: sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous and charitable. Let us now therefore look at this condition in another, but truer light. Let it be supposed, that this same *Negotius* was a painful laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank, nor debauched; but was sober and regular in his business; that he grew old in this course of trading; and that the end and design of all this labour was only this, that he may die possessed of more than an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs, and as many great coats. Let it be supposed, that the sober part of the world say of him when he is dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough master of business, and had acquired an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs, when he died. Now if this was really the case, I believe it would be readily granted, that a life of such business was as poor and ridiculous as any that can be invented: But it would puzzle any one to shew, that a man that has spent all his time and thoughts in business and hurry, that he might die, as it is said, worth an hundred thousand pounds, is any whit wiser than he, who has taken the same pains to have as many pair of boots and spurs, when he leaves the world; for, if the temper and state of our souls be our whole state; if the only end of life be to die as free from sin, and exalted in virtue as we can; if naked as we came, so naked we are to return, and to stand a trial before Christ, and his holy angels, for everlasting happiness or misery; what can it possibly signify, what

what a man had or had not, in this world? What can it signify, what you call those things, which a man has left behind him; whether you call them his, or any one's else; whether you call them trees or fields, or birds, or feathers; whether you call them an hundred thousand pounds, or an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs? I say, call them; for the things signify no more to him than the names. Now it is easy to see the folly of a life thus spent, to furnish a man with such a number of boots and spurs. But yet there needs no better faculty of seeing, no finer understanding, to see the folly of a life spent in making a man possessor of ten towns, before he dies; for, if when he has got all his towns, or all his boots, his soul is to go to his own place amongst separate spirits, and his body be laid by in a coffin, till the last trumpet calls him to judgment; where the inquiry will be, how humbly, how devoutly, how purely, how meekly and charitably we have spoke, thought and acted, whilst we were in the body; how can we say, that he who has wore out his life in raising an hundred thousand pounds, has acted wiser for himself, than he who has had the same care to procure an hundred thousand of any thing else. But farther: Let it now be supposed, that *Negotius*, when he first entred into business, happening to read the gospel with attention, and eyes opened found that he had a much greater business upon his hands, than that to which he had served an apprenticeship; that there were things, which belong to man of much more importance than all that our eyes can see; so glorious, as to deserve all our thoughts; so dangerous, as to need all our care; and so certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer. If *Negotius* believing these things to be true, had entirely devoted himself to God, at his first setting out in the world, resolving to pursue his business no farther than was consistent with great devotion, humility and self-denial; and for no other ends, but to provide himself with a sober subsistence, and to do all the good that he could to the souls and bodies of his fellow-creatures. Now, had this been the Christian spirit of *Negotius*, can any one, who is truly in his senses, say he had

had lost any degree of true joy and happiness by thus conforming to the spirit of Christianity: And yet I doubt not, but worldly Christians of every denomination will oppose, and endeavour to discredit such a representation of Christianity; but when you represent to your mind, how Christians ought to live unto God, and in what degree of wisdom and holiness they ought to use the things of this life, you must not look at the world, which lies in wickedness, and whose wisdom is foolishness with God; but you must look towards heaven. You must with the eyes of faith penetrate into the invisible world, the world of spirits, and consider your order and condition among them; you must endeavour, by the help of grace, to put in practice the highest precepts of the gospel: You must think, how departed souls would live, if they were again to act the short part of human life, and what degree of wisdom and holiness you will wish for, when you are leaving this world. Now, this is not proposing to ourselves any needless perfection; it is but barely complying with the precepts of the gospel, which requires that *we be holy in all manner of conversation*, and with the advice given by the Apostle, viz. *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* For no one can come near the doctrine of this passage, but he, that proposes to himself to do every thing in this life, as a servant of God, and to make the wisdom and holiness of the gospel the rule and measure of his desiring and using every gift of God. And as the holiness of Christianity consecrates all estates and employments of life unto God, so are we more especially obliged to observe this religious exactness in the use of our estates and fortunes, because, if we waste them, we don't waste a trifle, that signifies little; but we waste that, which might be made as eyes to the blind, as a husband to the widow, and as a father to the orphan; If a man had eyes, hands and feet, that he could give to those that wanted them; *if he should* either lock them up in a chest, or please *himself with some needless and ridiculous use of them.*

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instead of giving them to his brethren that were blind and lame ; should we not justly reckon him an inhuman wretch, if he should rather chuse to amuse himself with furnishing his house with those things, than to entitle himself to an eternal reward, by giving them to those that wanted eyes and hands ; might we not justly reckon him mad ? for after we have satisfied our own sober and reasonable wants, all the rest of our money is like spare eyes and hands ; something that can only be well used, by giving it to those that want it. These tempers and this use of our worldly goods, is so much the doctrine of all the New Testament, that you can't read a chapter without being taught of it. I shall only produce one remarkable passage, which is sufficient to justify what I have said concerning this religious use of all our fortune.

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ; or naked, and clothed thee ? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—And the righteous shall go into life eternal. Matth. 25 : 31-46.*

In an account of the life of the Lady Elizabeth Hastings we meet with an extraordinary instance of the happy effect which Christianity has upon those, who by joining  
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with the calls of grace, become willing to give up their whole Hearts to follow its dictates. This pious Lady's first principle appears to have been the Glory of God, and the purity of her own heart; next to this a continual solicitude and labour to hold all her capacities, all her power, and all her fortunes continually upon stretch for the good of all men, weeping with those that wept; rejoicing with those that rejoiced; given to hospitality; distributing to the necessities of the saints, and to those that were less so having joy at the conversion of a sinner, or the least appearance of it; but the care of all her cares was the stranger; the fatherless and the widow; the needy, and he that hath no helper; the lame, the halt and the blind. And in this place, says the author of her life, what shall I say! or how can I expect to be believed! The bent of her spirit ever lay towards these: She had a share in all their sufferings; she would often converse with them, and enquire into their history, with as much poverty of spirit, as they were in of outward condition; she would study their particular cases, and put them in the way of better welfare; some of these were ever in her house, and frequently in great numbers; and it was no neglect of her's, if any one went away unrelieved with meat, physic, raiment or money; many of these that lived remote, had yearly allowances, and large sums frequently issued out into distant parts of the kingdom. Her still larger applications were fixed pensions upon reduced families, the maintenance of her own charity-school, contributions to others, &c. &c. She was a great mistress of all parts of œconomy with respect to what she laid out upon herself; her body, she knew, was the temple of the Holy Ghost, which the believer must possess in sanctification and honour, wherefore her support of it in meat, drink and sleep was ever bounded by necessity for they that walk in the Spirit, as this pious Lady did die progressively to every vanity, and dare not indulge the hurtful gratifications of the flesh, but labour to keep it under, as knowing it to be the seat and repository of their most dangerous and deadly enemy. Nevertheless *she sought not her salvation by the force of her alms* highly

highly affluent as they were; for these, though necessary duties, yet, she well knew, were not the charity of the gospel; not that charity which the Apostle Paul so divinely describes at *1 Corinths*. 13: 3. She was sensible, that Jesus Christ must be revealed in the heart before we can have any just claim to discipleship, and that it is his ruling and bringing all things there in subjection to his Spirit that was the great and only principle of Christian charity. She knew, that the great scene of religion lay within, in the right government of the heart; accordingly her eye was ever upon her heart, to see that all its principles were cleansed from evil mixtures, had no taint from self-love, were not sullied with vain-glory; her care was to observe the tendency of all its motions, how its struggles weakened in sinful desires, endeavouring continually to nourish it by acts of faith in the blood of her Redeemer. She had well learnt to overcome evil with good, to suffer long and be kind, to bear all things, and if ever by speech, carriage or otherwise she suspected, that she had disturbed the spirit of any, she had no peace with herself till she had taken care for the recovery of theirs.

Much more might be said of the endowments and virtues of this true disciple of Jesus Christ, more especially of her patience under sufferings, and resignation to Divine Will; under the painful dispensation she passed through, during the last eighteen months of her life, occasioned by a cancer in her breast, which, notwithstanding she suffered it to be separated from her body, yet in the end occasioned her death. This painful operation she not only bore with patience, but even rejoiced, that she was counted worthy to suffer, knowing her Saviour had suffered in his flesh, and that as sufferings was the way to his perfection, it must also be the way to our's, this being the declared condition of our being glorified with him; the truest marks of adoption, and the most sovereign medicine sent from heaven for our cure. These truths this truly pious Lady was so well acquainted with, that she declared, *She would not wish to be out of her present situation, nor exchange it for any other at any price.* Thus  
with



with great meekness and tranquility, with chearfulness scarce to be believed, in perfect serenity and freedom, she continued her usual life till the time appointed for the operation. When that time of deep trial came, she shewed no reluctance or struggle, but endured all even without complaint; only towards the end she drew such a sigh, as the compassionate reader who reads this, may do. Hence it appears, how those that follow the Lamb with sincerity, are endowed with virtue and power resulting from the true spirit of his religion, which others are unacquainted with. The night following the operation was not indeed a night of much sleep, but of truly celestial rest; a night of thanksgiving to her God for the visible demonstration of his power in her and about her, for his stretched-out arm in her great deliverance, for the bountiful provision he had made for her body and soul, holding all the powers of her spirit exercised in acts of love, gratitude and adoration. She sooner than was expected got upon her feet, and, with every improvement that could be made, into the same way of life that she had been in before, wholly intent upon the glory of God, and the good of her fellow-creatures. But the distemper only repressed for a time, rose up with new malignity, to the much greater affliction of numbers in the world, than of her that bore it; for she had now been, for some time, in the school of affliction, exercised with its sharp discipline, and found its salutary effects. Under these sentiments her hope was full of immortality, and the eternal weight of glory, now in full view, made all her afflictions light. In this near and certain approach of death, her cherishing warmth, like that of the sun, though it might be most felt by those nearest, yet also reached those at greater distance; witness the great number of letters she writ, and dictated to others when she became unable to write, full of sweet counsel, having for their argument the blessedness of piety; pressing home the necessity of it, and setting forth its true nature; witness also the number of persons of all conditions who resorted at her house, to behold the living *power of religion* in her, and to be benefited by her wisdom.

wisdom. With some of these she continued in heavenly conferences as long as she had strength. Her life was near drawing to its last stage; but her lamp and her life must be extinguished together, and she must occupy till her Lord comes. Accordingly she convened her household, to strengthen and enforce every thing that she had done or shewn them before, by her dying counsels; and would have extended this care to the whole village, but was restrained by the physician. *The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* “The truly religious, whose evidences  
 “for heaven are clear, rational, and well grounded,  
 “have a tide of joy springing up in their minds beyond  
 “expression; something more moving and satisfactory  
 “than any one can imagine, but they that perceive  
 “it.—When they are just entering upon the promised  
 “land, the splendor of the eternal day dawns upon  
 “them, and shines as through the breaches of their  
 “shattered bodies, and raises in the inward man such  
 “earnest of happiness, such foretastes of joy, as enables  
 “them to pass through the valley of death in peace and  
 “triumph.” As death drew near, she was in transport, quite melted down with the impression of glory, broke out with a raised accent into these words: *Bless me, Lord! what is it that I see! — Oh! the greatness of the glory that is revealed in me, — that is before me.* And some time after she had so said, she fell asleep.

And now, Reader, let me ask, What mistakes or delusions did this Lady live under? or what wrong judgment did she make of the nature and obligation of our common Christianity? Common I call it, for it is one and the same to every man and to every woman, wherever it is known, and to the practice of the essential and life-giving part of it, is every man and every woman tied down at their utmost peril. And if it be asked, what these are? the answer is, That they cannot here indeed be well drawn out in particulars; but two principal ones, to which the rest are reducible, are, *A firm Faith in, and Dependence upon, Christ* — And un-  
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*der the Help and Power of his Spirit, a mighty Labour to perfect that Holiness which he hath taught us.*

All indeed have not this Lady's possibilities, and cannot give in alms sevenfold more than they expend upon themselves; but there is scarce one, but may give a cup of cold water, and great things are promised even to that, if it is done in a right manner, and with a devout spirit. Again, all have not near the same disengagements and leisure that she had, nor have in common with her the same command of their time, and therefore cannot maintain so close an attendance upon spiritual exercises; yet nevertheless almost all may, at all times and in all places, preserve some sort of heavenly-mindedness, may strive against sin, and use their best endeavours to keep themselves unspotted from the world, and by locking up their senses against temptation, in good measure quench the fiery darts of the enemy. And if of themselves they are not (as most certainly they are not) sufficient for these things, yet the Grace of God is, if they turn to it, seek it earnestly, follow its holy motions, and put themselves under its government. And that all may obtain the Grace of God, is certain; for it is common to all. Our gracious and merciful Saviour, the sure and faithful Friend of those who are helpless and heavy laden, repeatedly declares it to be so, and the whole tenor of the gospel contains a gracious offer of salvation to every soul who in sincerity prays to God for it. He who is *Love itself*, will surely send none empty away. If ye (says that true friend of the contrite and humble) who are evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Spirit to those that ask. Wherefore, how amazing is it, that even one soul in the whole world, can believe, that GOD, who is the source and well-spring of Light and Love, and made man for the purpose of his own Glory, should not be willing that *all Men* should be saved. More especially, when the nature of the Gospel is considered to be, as indeed it is, a declaration of *Peace and Good-will to man*; that it is *good tidings of great joy, to ALL People*: Luke 2: 10. That the

the Lord is long suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come unto repentance: 1 Tim. 2: 4. That Christ our Saviour is the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world: John 1: 29. That he was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world: John 1: 9. That the Grace which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all men: Tit. 2: 11. That by that Grace he should taste Death for every man: Heb. 2: 9. That he came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. John 3: 17. Wherefore the Apostle tells the Believers, That if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; that he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for our Sins only, but also for the Sins of the whole world: 1 John 2: 1, 2. The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Petr. 3: 9. And farther the Apostle exhorts, That prayers, intercession and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authorities; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Tim. 2: 1. Our blessed Saviour, the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth, in whose mouth was no guile, himself declares, That this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. John 3: 19. And to the Jews he says, Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. John 5: 40. And when weeping over Jerusalem, he says, How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Math. 23: 37. To these great truths the spirit of prophecy in former dispensations bears ample record, as at Acts 10: 43, That to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in

in him, shall receive remission of sins; and the Psalmist positively declares, That the Lord is loving unto every man, and that his mercy is over all his works, Psal. 145: 9. The Prophet Isaiah also, speaking in the name of the Lord, says, *I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right*——*A just God and Saviour, there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.* Isa. 45: 22. And Jeremiah bids, *Howl for Babylon, take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.* Jer. 51: 8. Also of Jezebel it is said, *I gave her time and space for repentance; but she repented not.* Rev. 11: 20. And although a man should be brought into doubtings, so as to believe that God is not willing to save every man that cometh into the world, yet one would hardly think any would be so bold as to say so, since God with an express oath hath sworn the contrary. Ezek. 33: 11. *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye from your evil ways. Why will ye die.* Chap. 18: 23, *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord, and not that he should turn from his way and live? — Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O House of Israel. Is not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Therefore I will judge you, O House of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God, repent and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin——and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?*









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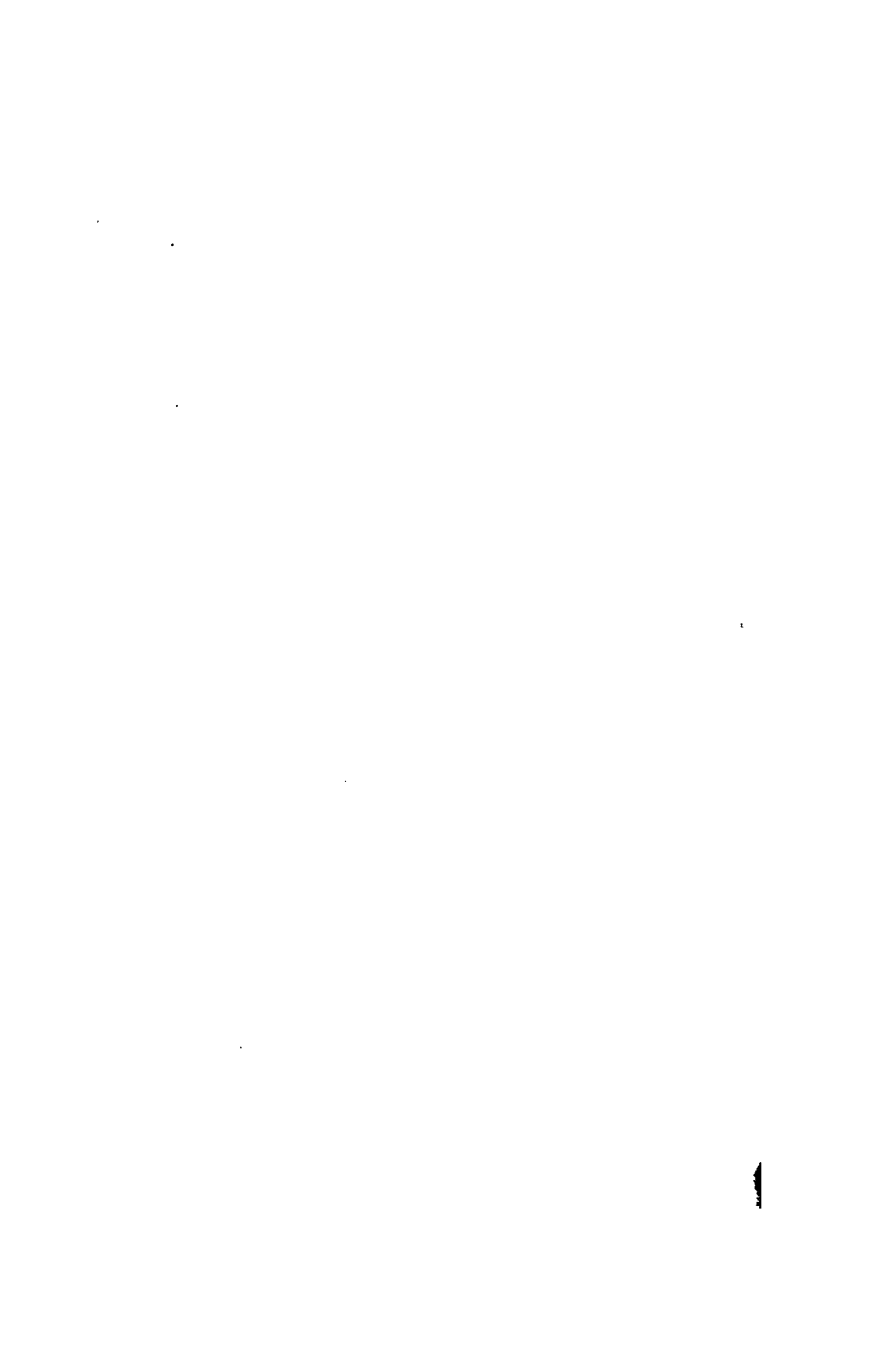






















































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